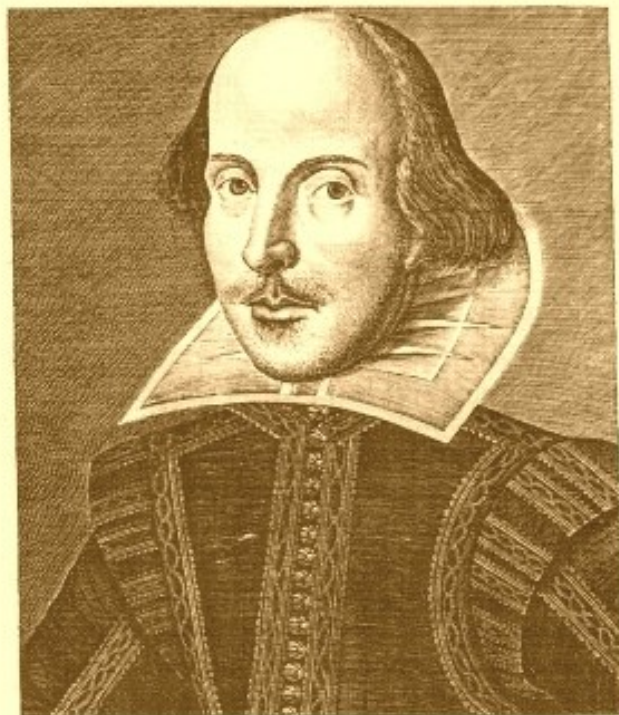


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to Modern English - for contemporary
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Shakespeare For White Trash: Henry VI, Part Two

Classic literature translated into Modern English by Crad Kilodney

October 7, 2010 – Author’s Note:

“Shakespeare For White Trash” is a series of condensed rewrites designed to make Shakespeare understandable and enjoyable to those who have little or no knowledge of him. The plots and characters are unchanged, but everything else has been radically restyled. Read my versions and you’ll be a Shakespeare fan forever!

These plays are intended to be performed, as well as read.

Main Characters

King Henry VI

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester — his uncle

Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester

Queen Margaret

Cardinal of Winchester (a.k.a. Henry Beaufort) — great-uncle to the King

Duke of Somerset (a.k.a. Edmund Beaufort) — the Cardinal’s nephew

Duke of Buckingham (one of two characters named Sir Humphrey Stafford — see *Note below)

Lord Clifford (Thomas, or “Old” Clifford)

Young Clifford — his son John

Richard, Duke of York

Edward Plantagenet and Richard Plantagenet — sons of Richard, Duke of York, and later Edward IV and Richard III

Earl of Salisbury (a.k.a. Richard Neville) — son-in-law to the Salisbury in *Part One*; also brother-in-law to the Duke of York

Earl of Warwick (a.k.a. Richard Neville) — Salisbury’s son, and son-in-law to the Warwick in *Part One*

Duke (Marquis) of Suffolk (a.k.a. William de la Pole)

Jack (or John) Cade — rebel leader

Sir Humphrey Stafford (*Note: This was the 7th Baron Stafford, who was related to the Duke of Buckingham.)

William Stafford — his brother

Lord Scales

Lord Saye (or Say)

Sheriff

Sir John Stanley

Margery (or Marjorie) Jordan — witch

John Hume and John Southwell — priests

Roger Bolingbroke — conjurer

Thomas Horner — armourer to the Duke of York

Peter Thump — Horner's assistant and one of three Petitioners

Two Other Petitioners

Alexander Iden

Ship's Captain, Master, Master's Mate, and Walter Whitmore — pirates

Two Gentlemen — prisoners with Suffolk

Clerk of Chatham

Mayor of Saint Albans

Simon Simpcox and his Wife

George Bevis, John Holland, Dick the Butcher, Smith the Weaver — followers of Cade

Two Murderers

Herald (delivers the Epilogue and the speech in Act 4, Scene 3A)

Gist of the story: These events take place from 1445 (marriage of Henry and Margaret) to 1455 (first Battle of Saint Albans). King Henry's court is beset with disunity. Gloucester is horrified to learn that the deal that brought Margaret to England as Henry's Queen involves returning lands to the French previously won by Henry V. Winchester, Somerset, Suffolk, and Buckingham are out to get Gloucester, who is the King's Protector and the one who really runs things. Gloucester's wife is accused of witchcraft and exiled. Gloucester is accused of various bogus offenses and then murdered. With Gloucester gone, this court is in big trouble, because Henry is a weak king. Richard, Duke of York,

gets Salisbury and Warwick on his side, because he intends to claim the throne. York is sent to Ireland to suppress rebels, but before he goes, he arranges with Jack Cade to stir up a rebellion against the King. The rebellion is suppressed, but York sees that there is considerable discontent with Henry. York returns with his army, plus the Irish, and claims the throne. The Wars of the Roses have now broken out for real. The Yorks defeat the Lancasters at Saint Albans, and as the play ends, the Lancasters are retreating to London.

(Once again, the reader is cautioned that Shakespeare takes a lot of liberties with historical details for the sake of the story line. The Yale Shakespeare edition of 1923 has excellent notes on the history. I have added an Epilogue because the ending needed help. This is the first modernized version of *Henry VI, Part Two* ever published.)

Act 1, Scene 1. *The King's palace in London. Flourish of trumpets and flourish of oboes to indicate two parties coming in. From one side: King Henry, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, the Duke of Somerset, the Duke of Buckingham, and the Cardinal of Winchester; from the other side: the Duke of York, the Marquis of Suffolk, Queen Margaret, the Earl of Salisbury, and the Earl of Warwick. [Author's note: This Suffolk is the younger brother of the Suffolk who was killed at Agincourt in Henry V. He was referred to as an earl in Part One and has since been promoted to marquis, one rank below duke. Everyone else is related to the King in some way. This is the first meeting of Henry and Margaret, who has just been brought back from France to be Henry's Queen. Historically, Margaret was 15 at this time, and Henry was 23.]*

Suffolk (Bows to the King): Your most gracious Majesty, I have carried out the mission I was sent to do. Before the high lords of France, I was your proxy in marriage to Lady Margaret of Anjou. Now I relinquish the title of husband and present her to you as your lawfully wedded wife. This is the happiest gift that a lord ever gave to his King—and the most beautiful queen a king ever received.

King: I thank you with all my heart, my lord of Suffolk. She is just as beautiful as you described her.—Welcome, Queen Margaret—my happiness! *(He kisses her gently.)* Never did a king love his queen more than I love you now.

Queen: And may our love grow day by day as long as we live. This is the happiest day of my life.

Suffolk (Kneeling): Long live Queen Margaret, England's happiness!

All the Lords (Kneeling): God bless the Queen!

Queen (Wiping away a tear of joy): Thank you, my lords.

(A trumpet flourish. They all rise.)

Suffolk (To Gloucester): My lord of Gloucester, here are the articles of peace between England and France, providing for a truce of eighteen months.

(He hands Gloucester a document.)

Gloucester: Yes. Very good. *(He reads aloud)* “It is agreed between King Charles of France and the Marquis of Suffolk, representing King Henry of England, that King Henry shall marry Lady Margaret, daughter of the Duke of Anjou, who shall become Queen of England. It is further agreed that the lands of Maine and Anjou—” *(He hesitates, looking stunned)* —“shall be—” *(He drops the paper.)*

King: What’s the matter, uncle?

Gloucester: Sorry—I—I just feel a little sick all of a sudden.

(Winchester picks up the paper quite cheerfully and finishes reading it.)

Winchester (Reading): “The lands of Maine and Anjou shall be returned to her father—”

(York, Salisbury, and Warwick exchange astonished looks.)

Winchester (Reading): “And that Lady Margaret is delivered at England’s expense and with no dowry.”

King: Excellent. Excellent.—My lord of Suffolk, you deserve a reward for this. Please kneel before me.

(Suffolk kneels. The King taps him on the shoulders with his sword.)

King: You are hereby promoted—to Duke of Suffolk. Arise.

(Suffolk rises.)

Suffolk: Thank you, my lord!

King (To the Lords): I thank all of you for your kindness. And now we will have Margaret formally crowned Queen of England.—Come.

(Henry, Margaret, and Suffolk go out, but Gloucester signals everyone else to remain.)

Gloucester: Am I fucking dreaming or what? After all we went through fighting in France, and everything my brother fought for, and all the bullshit we’ve been through trying to control the French—we’re giving back Maine and Anjou? I can’t believe it!

Winchester: Now, now, my lord, don’t exaggerate. France is still ours—basically.

Gloucester: Basically not. Not without Maine and Anjou.

Salisbury: That’s practically all of Normandy.

Warwick: Our soldiers died to win those lands.

[Author’s note: Richard’s speech prefix throughout this play will be York, because we will meet his son Richard later.]

York: Duke of Suffolk!—Should be Puke of Suffolk! This is the worst deal of all time. We give up key territories and we get a Queen with no dowry. When did a King of England ever marry a Queen with no dowry?

Gloucester: And we paid all her expenses here, and Suffolk levied a special tax for it.

Winchester: My Lord Gloucester, I think you're being entirely too critical. You should be thinking about the King's happiness. After all, he's your nephew.

Gloucester: Don't give me that bullshit, Winchester. You engineered this fucking farce—you and Suffolk together.

Winchester: And we're proud of it. And you should mind your language.

Gloucester: It's not my language you don't like. It's me. You've been getting in my way every chance you could.—But I'm not going to stand here and argue about it. I'll just say one thing.—This deal means we lose France. That's it.

(He leaves angrily.)

Winchester: Well, there goes our Lord Protector in one of his snits.

Buckingham: We all knew he wasn't your friend.

Winchester: He's not my friend, and he's not your friend either—or anyone else's. He's only thinking about his own interests—and by that I mean the throne. As of this moment, who's next in line after the King?

Buckingham: He is.

Winchester: Exactly. So don't let him fool you the way he fools the common people. Oh, they think he's just wonderful, don'tcha know. "God bless Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester! Our hero!" And he's still the Lord Protector.

Buckingham: The King's twenty-three. He doesn't need a Protector any more.

Winchester: Exactly right.

Buckingham: I think it's about time we put him in his proper place. If we act together, we can do it. And Suffolk will join us for sure.

Winchester: Now the Duke of Suffolk! Yeah, he will for sure. I think I'll go have a word with him.

(Winchester leaves.)

Somerset: Buckingham, just slow down for a minute, okay? Look, I know Gloucester rubs us the wrong way sometimes, but, uh, I gotta say—*(He jerks his thumb toward Winchester's exit)*—my uncle, the Cardinal, has his own agenda. He's getting old, but he still thinks about advancement—like Lord Protector. He's been trying to throw Gloucester under an oxcart ever since Henry the Fifth died.

Buckingham: Yeah, I think you're right about that. The Lord Protector should be—a younger fellow!—like you or me, right? Ha, ha!

Somerset: You got it!—Ha, ha!

(Buckingham and Somerset leave. There is a pause as Salisbury, Warwick, and York look at each other seriously.)

Salisbury: I have a good title for that soap opera we just saw—"The Proud and the Ambitious."

Warwick: You can say that again.

Salisbury: I'm not getting into that sort of thing. We have to put England first. We have to do the right thing for the country.

York: Yes. Absolutely.

Salisbury: Gloucester has always been a good man. But that Cardinal—God almighty!—he's the lowest sort of high churchman I've ever met.

Warwick: Yes.

Salisbury: You, my son, are second only to Gloucester in the respect the people have for you.—And you, my lord of York, stand very tall with the people for all your service in France. The three of us have to use our influence to check the ones who are proud—and I mean Suffolk and Winchester—and the ones who are ambitious—and that's Somerset and Buckingham.

Warwick: Yes. For the good of England.

York: Amen to that.

Salisbury: Son, let's go to the coronation.

(Salisbury and Warwick leave. York speaks directly to the audience.)

York: For the good of England—which rightfully belongs to me. That's why I'm more pissed off about Maine and Anjou than anyone—even Gloucester. But I'm going to bide my time. For the moment, I'll be like the two Richard Nevilles—Salisbury and Warwick. I'll stay friends with Gloucester. But I can tell things are going to break down around here. Too many people are out to get Gloucester. If anything happens to him, the Lancasters' days are numbered, because Gloucester's the only bit of glue that's keeping their straw house from collapsing. Henry doesn't know what's happening half the time. He's in a bubble. I'm just going to wait for my opportunity, and then I'll make my move for the throne—which the Lancasters stole from my mother's people, the Mortimers. And then England will get the strong King it deserves. England will be ruled by the House of York.

(He leaves.)

[Author's note: York's claim to the throne was based on his father's marriage to Anne Mortimer, the sister of Edmund Mortimer, who should have been King after Richard II. For a more detailed explanation, see the previous play in this series, Henry VI, Part One (Act 2, Scene 4).]

Act 1, Scene 2. *The Duke of Gloucester's house in London. Gloucester comes in with his wife, Eleanor, the Duchess.*

Duchess: You're distracted today, Humphrey. What's the matter?

(He shrugs as if he doesn't want to talk about it.)

Duchess: Maybe it's the King. We all know he's weak. He's not like your brother—or you.—Perhaps you're thinking about the crown. You could have it if you wanted it. I'd help you.

Gloucester: I don't want to hear that kind of talk, Eleanor. Do you think I'd overthrow my own nephew? I wouldn't do that.—Anyway, that's not why I'm distracted.

Duchess: Then what is it?

Gloucester: I had a dream.

Duchess: About what?

Gloucester: I dreamed that someone broke my official staff in two. It might have been Winchester. And on the two broken ends were the heads of Somerset and Suffolk. What it means, I have no idea.

Duchess: Oh, it's nothing. It only means that whoever tries to do you harm will be punished for it. That's obvious enough.—But I had a dream, too. I dreamed that I was in Westminster Abbey. And I was wearing the Queen's crown. And Henry and Margaret were kneeling before me.

Gloucester: That's a terrible dream! You should be ashamed! You're the second-highest ranking woman in the Kingdom. Isn't that enough for you?

Duchess: I think it's normal for people to—look upward, shall we say.

Gloucester: What do you want to do, disgrace me? Do you want people to think I'm after the throne? I never want to hear another word about it!

Duchess: Well—if that's the scolding I get just for relating a dream, I'll just keep them to myself from now on.

Gloucester: Ohh—I'm sorry.

(A Messenger comes in.)

Messenger: My lord, the King and Queen are going hunting at Saint Albans, and he wants you to join them.

Gloucester: Yes. All right.—Eleanor, want to come along?

Duchess: Yes. I don't mind. But you go on, and I'll catch up with you.

Gloucester: All right.

(Gloucester and the Messenger leave. She makes sure he's gone, then calls offstage.)

Duchess: Sir John! Are you there? We're alone.

(Sir John Hume, a priest, comes in. [Author's note: "Sir" was a form of address commonly used with priests.] Hume comes in, smiling.)

Hume: God save your Highness!

Duchess: Highness? I'm not the Queen. I'm only a duchess.

Hume: That could change.

Duchess: So! Have you been to see them?

Hume (Teasingly): Who, madam?

Duchess: You know—the sorcerers—Margery Jordan and Roger Bolingbroke.

Hume: Ah—yes. I have.

Duchess: And? Will they help me?

Hume: Yes. They've promised to conjure up a spirit who will answer all your questions.

Duchess: Good! I'll think about what I want to ask, and when I get back from Saint Albans, we'll arrange a meeting.—Here. This is a little something for you. *(She gives him some money.)*

Hume: You are very kind, madam.

Duchess: Now I must go.

(She leaves.)

Hume: Pretty good. I get money from the Duchess to introduce her to sorcerers. And I get money from Winchester and Suffolk to encourage the Duchess's morbid interest in sorcery. Of course, sorcery is illegal. The Duchess will end up in big trouble, and Gloucester's reputation will be shot. Personally, I have no interest in politics. I just like money.

(He leaves.)

Act 1, Scene 3. *Outside the King's palace in London. Three Petitioners come in, including Peter.*
[Author's note: In this context, a petitioner is someone with a request, complaint, or appeal of any sort, to be delivered to the King. The petition would be in writing and would be rolled up like a scroll. A similar scene occurs in Julius Caesar.]

First Pet: We'll all wait together for the Duke of Gloucester to show up, and then we'll give him our petitions.

Second Pet: Yes, yes. He's a good man. He's fair.

Peter: That he is. Any problem or complaint, you can always bring it to him, and he'll do the right thing.

(Suffolk and Queen Margaret come in.)

First Pet: Here he is.

Second Pet: No—wait. That's not Gloucester. That's Suffolk

Suffolk: What do we have here—petitions?

First Pet: We were waiting for the Lord Protector, sir.

Queen (Surprised): You're bringing petitions to Lord Gloucester?

First Pet: Yes, madam.

Queen: What's yours about?

First Pet: I have a complaint against John Goodman, the Cardinal's man, for keeping my house and my lands and my wife from me.

Suffolk (Condescendingly): Well, well!—That would be annoying, wouldn't it? *(To the Second Petitioner)* And what's your problem?

Second Pet: Em—

(Suffolk snatches the petition and reads it.)

Suffolk (Reading): "Against the Duke of Suffolk for putting a fence around the picnic ground at Melford." *(With exaggerated severity)* What do you mean by this, you troublemaker!

Second Pet: Please, sir—it's from the township. I'm only delivering it for them.

Suffolk (To Peter): And what's your calamity?

Peter: My lord, it's a complaint against my master, Thomas Horner, armourer to the Duke of York. Thomas Horner said that the Duke of York was the rightful heir to the throne, and that King Henry was a usurper.

Queen: What!

(Suffolk is grim. He beckons to a Servant offstage. The Servant comes in.)

Suffolk (To the Servant): Take this man in to see the King and send a messenger for Thomas Horner at the Duke of York's.

Servant: Yes, my lord.

(The Servant leaves with Peter.)

Queen: As for you two, if you have petitions—*(She grabs the petitions and tears them up)*—address them to the King, not to the Lord Protector.

Petitioners (Meekly): Yes, madam.

(The Petitioners leave.)

Queen: Is this the way you do things here in England? Who's in charge around here—the King or the Duke of Gloucester?

Suffolk: Ah, well, heh, heh—You hit the nail on the head, madam. The King wears the crown, but his Uncle Humphrey is the one who does the real managing.

Queen (Flirtatiously): You know, Suffolk, you made quite an impression in France. All the ladies thought you were very handsome. And I simply assumed the King would be more or less like you. But I was mistaken. He's not the sort of man a woman can get excited about. Oh, he's a nice man, of course. But he's more interested in his Bible and his books than anything else. He's more cut out to be a Pope than a king.

Suffolk: Be patient, madam. Remember when I first arranged your marriage to the King? I promised you I'd be your friend and confidant.

Queen: Which I've always appreciated.

Suffolk: Trust me, madam. Everything will work out for you.

Queen: You're the only one I do trust. Everyone else I find insufferable. Not just Gloucester, but that nasty Cardinal, and his nephew Somerset, and Buckingham, and York. They all seem to have more say about everything than the King does.

Suffolk: They're minor annoyances compared to the Nevilles—Salisbury and Warwick. Those two I'd keep my eye on. *[Author's note: The Nevilles were on the Lancaster branch of the family tree but were descended from John of Gaunt's second wife, Catherine. So they were half-cousins to King Henry.]*

Queen: Well, the one I really hate the most is Gloucester's wife, Eleanor. She acts like she's the queen bee. And she looks down on me because my father was broke until I married Henry.

Suffolk: Don't worry about the Duchess. She's about to get her wings clipped.

Queen: Oh?

Suffolk: Like I said—trust me. And as for York, this petition about his armourer is going to put him under a dark cloud. You just wait, madam. One by one, we'll get rid of all the people you hate, and you'll have all the power you want.

(A trumpet flourish. King Henry comes in with York and Somerset, the three of them in close conversation; also Gloucester, Eleanor, Buckingham, Salisbury, Warwick, and Winchester.)

King (To York and Somerset): Really, it doesn't matter to me which of you is Regent of France.

York: If you don't think I did a good job before in France, don't pick me.

Somerset: If you think York deserves it more than I do, pick him, by all means.

Warwick (To Somerset): He does deserve it more.

Winchester (To Warwick): That's for your superiors to judge.

Warwick: You're not my superior on the battlefield.

Buckingham: Everyone here is above you, Warwick.

Warwick: That could change. Just wait.

Salisbury (To Warwick): Save it. *(To Winchester)* And just why do you think Somerset should be Regent of France?

Queen: Because the King will choose him, that's why.

Gloucester: The King's old enough to speak for himself.

Queen: Then he doesn't need a Protector, does he?

Gloucester: He can let me go if he wants to.

Suffolk: Why don't you just do us all a favour and resign, Gloucester? I don't see that you've done any good anyway. The French have more power now than they did before. And you step on people as if you were King.

Winchester (To Gloucester): And you've taxed the people too much, and you take too much from the church.

Somerset: You live too high, Gloucester. You cost the country too much.

Buckingham: And you've exceeded your powers in punishing people.

Queen: And I've heard that you sell positions in France.

(Gloucester stalks out angrily. Then the Queen drops her glove in front of Eleanor, the Duchess.)

Queen (Rudely): Would you pick that up for me, please?

(The Duchess gives her a flash of indignation, then leans down to pick up the glove. The Queen then hits the Duchess on the head and pretends it was an accident.)

Queen: Oh! How clumsy of me! Did I hurt you?

Duchess (Through clenched teeth): You French bitch. I ought to claw your eyes out.

King: Auntie!—Please. She didn't mean it.

Duchess: Nephew, open your eyes. She's got you dangling on a string. You don't know what's what any more. *(To the Queen)* Nobody strikes the Duchess of Gloucester and gets away with it.

(The Duchess leaves in anger.)

Buckingham (Aside to Winchester): I'll just keep an eye on her.

(Buckingham goes out. Then Gloucester returns, more composed.)

Gloucester: Now that I'm calm, perhaps we can get down to business. And as for your various criticisms and accusations, if you can prove them, I will submit to the laws of the land. But God knows I'm true to my King and my country. *(To the King)* As to the Regent of France, York is the most suitable.

Suffolk: Hold on. Before we decide that, I have a good reason why York shouldn't be Regent.

York: Yeah. For one thing, I won't kiss your ass and tell you how brilliant you are. And for another thing, if I got the job, it would turn out just like last time, when Somerset did everything he could to undermine me. He'd do it again, and the French would be the beneficiaries.

Warwick: Damn straight.

Suffolk: Shut up.

Warwick: Why should I?

(Guards come in with Thomas Horner and Peter.)

Suffolk: This is why.—This is York's armourer. He's accused of treason. And as for York, he may have some explaining to do.

York: Hey, what is this?

King: What's this all about, Suffolk?

Suffolk: Your Majesty, this guy *(Pointing to Peter)* says that this guy *(Pointing to Horner)* said—that York is the rightful heir to the throne and your Majesty is a usurper.

King (To Horner): Did you say that?

Horner: I swear to your Majesty I never said any such thing.

Peter: I swear on me mother's grave, sir, he did say it—one evening when we were in the armoury polishing my lordship's armour.

York (To Horner): You'll hang for this! *(To the King)* Hang him, my lord.

Horner (To the King): Peter's lying, my lord. He's a bad guy. Always was.

King (To Gloucester): I don't know who to believe. What should we do?

Gloucester: Well, first thing—we can't send York to France as Regent. We'll have to send Somerset. And as for these two *(Indicating Horner and Peter)* let them duel it out, since they're accusing each other.

King: Yes, I suppose that's reasonable.—Somerset, I appoint you Regent of France.

Somerset: Thank you, your Majesty.

King: And these two fellows will settle their dispute by combat.

Horner: That's fine with me, my lord.

Peter (To Gloucester): Oh, no, my lord! I can't do combat! I don't know how! And I have an awful pain in me elbow—since yesterday, sir! And I get migraines and—

Gloucester: Well, you can have a migraine and a sore elbow, or you can be hanged—one or the other.

Peter: Oh, have pity, sir!

King: I rely on my uncle's advice, as always. These two will sit in prison until their day of combat, which will be the end of next month.—My cousin of Somerset, we'll see you off.—Come.

(They all leave.)

Act 1, Scene 4. *Evening in the garden of the Duke of Gloucester. At the rear of the stage there is an elevated platform, partially screened, something like a tree house. The witch Margery Jordan and the conjurer Roger Bolingbroke come in with the priests John Hume and John Southwell.*

Hume: The Duchess is expecting to see something, so you'd better put on a good show.

Bolingbroke: We will, don't worry. Why don't you take her up there *(Indicating the platform)* and let her watch.

Hume: Right.

(Hume leaves.)

Bolingbroke: Okay.—Margery, you lie on the ground, and the spirit will speak through you.—Southwell, you'll copy down the answers.

(Jordan lies down. Then the Duchess appears on the platform with Hume.)

Duchess (To Bolingbroke, in a loud whisper): Are you going to conjure up the spirit now?

Bolingbroke: Yes, madam. Leave it to us. We know what we're doing.

(Bolingbroke now goes through some preliminary actions just for effect—waving a wand, or speaking incantations, or sprinkling powder, etc. There is some lightning and thunder.)

Bolingbroke: I call to the spirit Ashmenaga!—Ashmenaga!

Jordan: This is Ashmenaga. Ask me any question.

Bolingbroke: What is the fortune of the King?

Jordan: There is a Duke—who lives—and he shall depose Henry—or be removed by Henry—and one shall outlive the other—and die a violent death.

(Southwell is writing down the answers.)

Bolingbroke: What is the fortune of the Duke of Suffolk?

Jordan: He shall die at sea.

Bolingbroke: And what about the Duke of Somerset?

Jordan: He should avoid castles.—That is all. I will say no more.

Bolingbroke: Then return to hell, thou spirit Ashme—*(He's forgotten the spirit's name)*—Ashme—Ashmegaly!

(More lightning and thunder. Then the Duke of York, Duke of Buckingham, and Guards, including Sir Humphrey Stafford, come in.)

York (To the Guards): Grab these people! They're under arrest for practising sorcery. *(To the Duchess, above)* Dabbling in the occult, are you, madam? Wait till the King finds out—and your husband.

Duchess: Oh! What kind of trick is this! How dare you accuse me!

York: You'd best come down—with your friend.

(The Duchess and Hume descend. Buckingham takes the paper from Southwell and looks it over quickly.)

Buckingham (To York): This is evidence. *(To the Guards)* Lock these people up. *(To the Duchess)* You're coming with us, madam. *(To Stafford)* Stafford, you take charge of her.

(All leave, except York and Buckingham.)

York: Good job, Buckingham. The King will get a report on this, and Gloucester will probably be standing there when he gets it—ha!

Buckingham: Let me be the one to take it to him.

York: Sure thing.

Buckingham: Thank you!

(Buckingham leaves. [Author's note: Despite the impression given by this scene, Buckingham was to remain loyal to the Lancasters during the Wars of the Roses, as the rest of the play will demonstrate.])

York (Calling): Yo!—Servant!

(A Servant appears.)

Servant: My lord of York. Yes, sir?

York: Tell Lord Salisbury and Lord Warwick that they're invited to dinner at my place tomorrow night.

Servant: Yes, my lord.

(They leave separately.)

Act 2, Scene 1. *Hunting grounds at Saint Albans. King Henry, Queen Margaret, Gloucester, Winchester, and Suffolk come in, with one or two Falconers holding falcons.*

King: I say, this is a lot of fun, hunting with falcons.—Margaret, do they do this in France?

Queen: Yes, but mainly to keep down the pigeon population. You have too many pigeons in England. I don't know why you tolerate them.

King: Ah, but the pigeon is so much like the dove. And the dove is the bird of peace.

Gloucester (Ironically): Just like our Lord Cardinal of Winchester—a bird of peace.

Winchester: Your falcon is particularly aggressive, Gloucester. You must have trained him yourself.

Gloucester: I'm a true sportsman, sir. I love to compete, but I always play fair.

Winchester: As long as you win. For me, the greatest rewards are in heaven. For you, they are on earth.

Gloucester: Meaning what, precisely?

Winchester: I mean the crown, of course. Perhaps your falcon will seize that next.

Gloucester: Certain species of snakes spit their poison. Are you related to any of them?

Suffolk: Perhaps the truth seems like poison to our Lord Protector.

Gloucester: You should know your place, Suffolk.

Queen: And you should know yours, Gloucester.

King: Please, my dear. You know how quarrels upset me. I just want all the nobles to be at peace. We should all be peacemakers, like our Lord and Saviour.

Winchester: Indeed, my lord. I'm always ready to make peace.

(He puts his hand on his sword for Gloucester's benefit. The two of them edge closer to each other to speak privately.)

Winchester: Shall I make my peace with our Lord Protector?

Gloucester: Any time, anywhere.

Winchester: Tonight. The east side of the grove. Just you and me.

Gloucester: I'll be there.

King: Uncle, what are you talking about?

Gloucester: Hunting with falcons, my lord.

Winchester: Yes, my lord.

King: All right. As long as everyone is getting along. That's all I care about.

(Shouting is heard offstage: "It's a miracle! It's a miracle!" Citizens come in, carrying Simon Simpcox in a chair, plus the Mayor and Simpcox's Wife.)

Citizen: A miracle, my lords! A miracle!

Suffolk: What miracle? What are you talking about?

Citizen: This man was blind until a half hour ago. He got his sight at Saint Alban's shrine.

King: Praise God! I want to hear all about it!

(The Citizens place Simpcox's chair before the King.)

King: What is your name, sir?

Simpcox: Simon Simpcox, my lord.

King: Tell me about your miracle.

Simpcox: I was born blind, my lord. But now I can see.

Simpcox's Wife: I can vouch for that, my lord. He's been blind since birth.

Gloucester: Who are you?

Simpcox's Wife: His wife, sir.

Gloucester: And you've known him since birth, have you?

Queen (To Simpcox): And why did you come to Saint Albans, Simpcox?

Simpcox: Saint Alban himself called to me in my sleep, madam. He said, "Simon Simpcox, come to my shrine and I will help you."

Simpcox's Wife: Yes, yes, it's true! I heard the voice myself!

Winchester: Why are you being carried? Can't you walk?

Simpcox: I am lame, sir.

Suffolk: Since birth?

Simpcox: No, sir. I fell from a tree.

Simpcox's Wife: A plum tree, it was.

Gloucester: You were blind, but you were climbing a tree?

Simpcox: Yes, sir. It was a long time ago. I wanted to get some plums for my wife. She's very fond of plums.

Gloucester: I see. Now, then, Simpcox, let me see your eyes.

(Gloucester examines Simpcox's eyes. Then he points to articles of his own clothing.)

Gloucester: What colour is this?

Simpcox: Red—cranberry red.

Gloucester: And this?

Simpcox: Forest green.

Gloucester: And this?

Simpcox: Golden yellow.

Gloucester: And this?

Simpcox: Coal black.

Gloucester: Now tell me, *Simpcox*. If you only just got your sight for the first time a half hour ago, how is it that you know the names of colours so specifically?

Simpcox: Em—well—

Simpcox's Wife: It's a miracle, my lord!

Gloucester: Indeed. Perhaps Saint Alban will cure your husband's lameness as well. Shall we find out?

Simpcox: Oh!

Gloucester (To the Citizens): Who's got a whip?

(A Citizen gives him a whip.)

Gloucester (To the Mayor): Let me borrow your hat, my Lord Mayor.

(He takes the Mayor's hat and puts it on the ground before Simpcox.)

Gloucester (To Simpcox): Stand up.

(Two Citizens help Simpcox stand up.)

Gloucester: Now, *Simpcox*—jump over the Mayor's hat, or I'll give you a good whipping.

Simpcox: Oh, but sir! Believe me, I'm lame. I came here for charity, you see.

Citizens: He's a fake! Whip him!

(Gloucester whips Simpcox, who runs out screaming. The Citizens laugh and shout "A miracle! A miracle!")

King: Tsk! Tsk!—Shameful! Such dishonesty!

Gloucester (Giving the Mayor his hat back): My Lord Mayor, I suggest you run *Simpcox* and his wife out of town immediately.

Simpcox's Wife: I'm sorry, sir. We just needed the money, that's all.

(The Mayor and Citizens take Simpcox's Wife and leave.)

Winchester: The Duke of Gloucester has performed a miracle.

Suffolk: Yes. He made the lame fly away—like that! *(Snaps his fingers.)*

Gloucester (Contemptuously): That's nothing compared to you two. You made Maine and Anjou fly away—like that! *(Snaps his fingers.)*

(Buckingham comes in.)

King: My cousin of Buckingham—what a surprise!

Buckingham: My lord, I'm sorry, but I have some rather upsetting news.

King: Oh? What is it?

Buckingham: It concerns the Duchess of Gloucester.

Gloucester: My wife? What about her?

Buckingham: Well, it seems that Lady Eleanor was caught with some other people engaging in witchcraft.

Others: What!

Buckingham: Specifically, she was seeking to learn information from a demonic spirit concerning your Majesty and certain other lords—how they would die, and so on.

Winchester (Aside to Gloucester): I guess I won't be seeing you tonight.

(Gloucester is too shocked to reply.)

King: This is terrible!—Uncle, can you explain this?

Gloucester: No, my lord. I'm totally at a loss.—I hope to God it isn't true. If it is, I'm through with her, and let the law deal with her.

King: Dear, dear, dear!—Well—we'll stay here tonight. Tomorrow we'll go back to London and try to get to the bottom of this. Whatever the truth is, we'll find it out and—I suppose—we'll just have to deal with it.

(They all leave.)

Act 2, Scene 2. *London. The Duke of York's garden. York comes in with Salisbury and Warwick.*

[Author's note: Salisbury and Warwick already know the family history that York relates to them, but Shakespeare has to make it clear to the audience.]

York: I want to explain my claim to the throne. I want you to understand, because I want you on my side.

Warwick: Cousin, if your claim is valid, we'll stand by you. *[Author's note: In Shakespeare, the term "cousin" is used loosely. York is Salisbury's brother-in-law, and Warwick is Salisbury's son.]*

Salisbury: Yes.

York: Let's start with Edward the Third. We're all on his tree. There were five sons that lived to adulthood. In order—Edward the Black Prince, Lionel of Antwerp, John of Gaunt, Edmund of Langley, and Thomas of Woodstock. The Black Prince died before Edward the King, so when Edward died, the crown passed to the Prince's son, who was Richard the Second. He was the last person on that branch of the tree. After him, the crown should have passed to Lionel's branch—specifically, to Edmund Mortimer. But Henry Bolingbroke, Gaunt's son, overthrew Richard and stole the crown, and Richard

died in prison. Bolingbroke was Henry the Fourth, the first King of the House of Lancaster. Then Henry the Fifth, and now Henry the Sixth. My father, the Earl of Cambridge, married Anne Mortimer, Edmund's sister—my mother. That puts me on Lionel's branch of the tree—ahead of the Lancasters. Edmund made me his heir before he died. So I have every right to claim the throne. Do you see?

Warwick (To Salisbury): He's right, father.

Salisbury: Yes. I agree.—Richard, you are the rightful King of England. I'll stand by you all the way. I swear it.

Warwick: So will I.

(They shake hands solemnly.)

York: I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Of course, I'm not King yet. The Lancasters won't be overthrown without a fight, and I'm not ready for that yet. For the time being, we have to keep our intentions secret and be patient and wait for the right opportunity. Gloucester's the main obstacle, but I think he'll be out of our way before long. As for everyone else, I expect they'll destroy each other trying to replace him. We'll just stand back and watch. And Henry's not a problem. He's weak. Margaret has more guts than he does.

Salisbury: You're right about that.

Warwick: We'll put you on the throne, cousin. You can count on it.

York: And you can count on big rewards when that day comes.

(They leave.)

Act 2, Scene 3. *A courtroom. The King, Queen, Gloucester, Suffolk, Buckingham, and Winchester come in first, followed by the Duchess of Gloucester, Margery Jordan, Southwell, Hume, and Bolingbroke, with Guards; finally, Richard, Salisbury, and Warwick.*

King: Duchess of Gloucester.

(She steps forward.)

King: Dame Eleanor Cobham—I am greatly saddened that my own aunt would be involved with witchcraft. This is a serious crime.—You four—Jordan, Southwell, Hume, and Bolingbroke—I sentence you to death.—To you, madam, I show mercy. You will do three days of penance in public. After that, you will be banished to the Isle of Man, in the custody of Sir John Stanley. *(To the Guards)* Take them away.

(All the guilty are taken out.)

King (To Gloucester): I'm sorry, uncle.

Gloucester: The sentence is fair, my lord. What hurts me most is to be dishonoured in my old age.—May I be excused?

King: Yes, uncle. Just leave your official staff. *(York, Salisbury, and Warwick flash a wink at each other.)* I don't need you to be my Protector any more. But, of course, I still love you as my uncle.

Queen (Harshly): The King's a grown man, Gloucester. Just leave the staff.

Gloucester (To Henry): Your father gave this to me, not as an instrument of power, but as a symbol of trust, honour, and responsibility. I only hope that the hands that hold it next treat it the same way.

(Gloucester puts the staff down in front of Henry and leaves. Margaret picks it up, admires it briefly, and hands it to the King.)

Suffolk (Aside): How the mighty have fallen.

York: Let's move on. *(To the King)* Your Majesty, today's the day that Horner and Peter have to do their combat.

Queen: Oh, goody! I've been waiting for this.

King: It's a sad thing, but it must be done—although I do hate violence.—Everyone make space for the combatants.—I believe they're fighting with staves. Is that right, my lord of York?

York: Yes, my lord.

(The stage is cleared. York signals, and the combatants are brought in—first Horner and a few of his friends, then Peter and a few of his friends. They are both carrying staves. Horner is drunk and looking confident, and his friends are giving him more wine. Peter is terrified and does not accept the wine his friends are offering him.)

Friends of Horner: Have another drink—ha, ha!

Horner: Thank you, thank you, thank you! I'll be pissing it out later on Peter's body—ha!

Peter: Oh, God save me!

Friends of Peter: Take a drink. It'll give you courage.

Peter: No, no. I'm too nauseous.

Salisbury: Enough drinking. Let's get on with it.—You—what's your name?

Peter: Peter.

Salisbury: Peter what?

Peter: Thump.

Salisbury: Thump?

Horner: As in—thump! *(He makes a gesture with his stave, as if striking Peter on the head. Horner's friends laugh.)*

Salisbury: And your name is?

Horner: Thomas Horner—hic!—And I'll punish this bastard for his false and dirty lies against me!

(Salisbury positions Horner and Peter for combat and then steps back.)

Salisbury: Fight!

(Horner and Peter fight. Horner is clumsy and chases Peter. Their friends are cheering them. Peter strikes a lucky blow to Horner's head. Horner falls.)

Horner (Dying): I—confess—treason—God forgive me—

(He dies.)

York: Well done, Peter. Never drink and duel, eh?—Ha, ha!

Peter (Looking up): Thank you, God!

King: Well, that settles the matter. God always protects the innocent. Horner was guilty of treason and Peter was telling the truth. *(To Peter)* Come with us, Peter, and we'll give you a little reward.

Peter: Oh, thank you, sir!

(All leave, some carrying Horner's body.)

Act 2, Scene 4. *A London street. Gloucester is pacing back and forth slowly. He is dressed in black. The Duchess comes in, barefoot, dressed in sackcloth, and carrying a candle. She is escorted by the Sheriff and Officers, plus Sir John Stanley. [Author's note: A mistake by Shakespeare. It would have been Sir Thomas Stanley.]*

Gloucester: Eleanor!

Duchess: Look at me now, Humphrey. Everyone jeers at me. I wish I were dead.

Gloucester: I don't know what to say. My heart is broken.

Duchess: You shouldn't have come out here to meet me. My disgrace touches you, too.

Gloucester: Try not to think about it.

Duchess: What else can I think about? After such a humiliation, there's nothing to look forward to except death. But you, Humphrey—you must think about your own safety. You have enemies.

Gloucester: Oh, you mean Winchester? Never mind about him.

Duchess: Not just Winchester.—Suffolk—York—even the Queen. They're out to get you.

Gloucester: I've never done anything wrong. Why should I worry?

Duchess: That doesn't matter. They'll resort to anything to get rid of you. You must be careful of them.

Gloucester: Don't worry about me. You just try to take one day at a time. The worst will be over soon enough. I want you to be strong.

(A Herald comes in.)

Herald: My lord of Gloucester, you are summoned to his Majesty's Parliament, to be held at Bury Saint Edmunds on the first of next month.

Gloucester: Parliament? Nobody told me about any Parliament.—All right, never mind. I'll be there.

[Author's note: This Parliament is a King's assembly, not the sort of Parliament we think of today.]

(The Herald leaves.)

Gloucester (To the Sheriff): Sheriff, don't keep her out here any longer than she's supposed to be.

Sheriff: I'm finished with her, sir. Sir John Stanley is in charge of her now.

Gloucester (To Stanley): I expect you to be kind to her.

Stanley: She'll be just fine, sir. I promise you.

(Gloucester, holding back tears, gives his wife a hug and leaves quickly.)

Duchess (After his departure): Goodbye.

Sheriff: Madam, I leave you now. I hope you aren't angry with me.

Duchess: No, Sheriff. You have done your duty. Goodbye.

Sheriff: Good luck, madam.

(The Sheriff leaves with his Officers. Stanley takes the candle from her, blows it out, and throws it away.)

Stanley: Madam, you can change into proper clothes now, and we'll be on our way to the Isle of Man.

Duchess: Yes, Stanley. I've always wanted to visit the Isle of Man. They say it's very nice this time of year.

(They leave.)

Act 3, Scene 1. *The Abbey at Bury Saint Edmunds. A trumpet flourish. The King, Queen, Cardinal of Winchester, Suffolk, York, Buckingham, Salisbury, Warwick, and Attendants come in to the Parliament.*

King: Gloucester's not here? It's not like him to be late.

Queen: He's become rather surly of late. I'd be careful of him if I were you. After all, he's next in line to the throne. You should regard him as a threat.—Am I right, Suffolk?

Suffolk: I agree with you, madam. And I think he put his wife up to that witchcraft business because he wanted to learn anything he could that would be to his advantage. There's a lot more to him than meets the eye.

King: Oh, I don't think so.

Winchester: He's punished people very harshly for small offenses. God knows what he would do if he ever became King.

York: He collected a lot of tax money to pay for our soldiers in France, and a lot of it has never been accounted for.

Buckingham: And those are just the things we know about. Imagine what things we don't know about.

Winchester (To the King): My lord, we only bring these matters up out of concern for you.

King: I appreciate that, of course—all of you. But I really don't think my uncle has done anything bad. He's not capable of any sort of wickedness. He's always been kind to me, and very helpful.

Queen: It's all a facade. It's his way of duping people. And he's good at it. The commoners all love him because they're too simple-minded to see below the surface.

(Somerset comes in.)

Somerset: Your Majesty.

King: Cousin of Somerset. What's the news from France?

Somerset: It's bad, my lord. *(He hesitates.)* We've lost all our territories to the French.

(The King is momentarily silent. He looks weak and confused.)

King: I can only think—that it must be God's will.

York (Aside to the audience): Fucking hell. Those are my territories.—And he's a fucking wimp.

(Gloucester comes in.)

Gloucester: I'm sorry I'm late, my lord.

King: I'm glad you're here, uncle.—Em—there's been some talk—em—it's—how shall I put it?—em—

Suffolk: Gloucester, you're under arrest for treason.

Gloucester: What! What are you talking about—treason! That's ridiculous!

York: My Lord Gloucester, it appears that you've held back certain funds that were meant to pay our soldiers in France—and that's why we've lost our territories.

Gloucester: Oh, really! Well, it so happens that I spent my own money to help pay the soldiers in France so that we wouldn't have to tax the people.

Winchester: That's just what I'd expect you to say.

York: And furthermore, you've inflicted cruel and unusual punishment, which is a disgrace to the country.

Gloucester: I've done no such thing. I've never been cruel to anyone. I've dealt with murderers harshly, but they deserved it.

Suffolk: There are other things that I don't think you can explain away so easily, so consider yourself arrested. The Lord Cardinal will take charge of you until your trial.

(Gloucester looks at all of them silently for a moment, while King Henry looks helpless.)

Gloucester (To the King): What a bad time to be a King—to be surrounded by villains like these. If England could be saved by my death, I'd die gladly. But my death—if that's what awaits me—will only be the beginning. Ambition and wickedness feed together, and their stomachs are never satisfied. *(To the Queen)* And you, madam, have been in on this all along. My wife tried to warn me about you. I'm sure you'll have no trouble packing the court with false witnesses against me.

Winchester (To the King): Listen to him—the way he attacks those who are thinking only of your well-being.

Suffolk (To the King): The Queen herself, my lord—the noblest lady in England!

Queen: Thank you, Suffolk. You are gallant.

Buckingham (To the King): Don't believe what Gloucester says, my lord. He's trapped, and he knows it.

Winchester (To the Attendants): Escort the Duke of Gloucester to a cell.

Gloucester (To the King): I'm not afraid for myself, my lord. I'm afraid for you.

King: Uncle—I—I just—I don't know what to think.

Suffolk: My lord, can all of us be wrong? We are all men of experience, and we agree.

Queen: Yes, my lord. Think.

King: I'm trying to.

(Winchester nods to the Attendants, and they take Gloucester out.)

King (Calling after Gloucester): I'm sorry!—Margaret, I love my uncle. I just can't believe—

(He looks at the Lords, but they are all stone-faced. Margaret is the coldest of all. The suggestion to the audience is that she controls him.)

Queen: You should lie down and rest, my lord.

(The King leaves, with Salisbury and Warwick following.)

Queen: The King is too close to his uncle to see him as we do.

Winchester: Quite so, madam.

Queen: It would be best if Gloucester were—out of the picture—if you gather my meaning.

Winchester: I do, madam. But it should be done through the legal process. We have to think of how the people will take it.

Suffolk: What if the legal process is—unsuccessful? The King still loves Gloucester. The people still love him. And as far as real evidence goes—well—what is there?

York: So what are you saying? You don't want him to die?

Suffolk: Of course, I do. I just don't see any point in being all fussy and legal about it. If you want to get rid of him, get rid of him. After all, it's for the King's own good, right?

Queen: Yes. Suffolk's right.

Suffolk: I don't mind doing it. Just say the word.

Winchester: No, no. Leave it to me.

York: We're doing the right thing. And never mind what the people think. They'll believe what we tell them.

(A Messenger comes in.)

Messenger: My lords, there's a rebellion in Ireland. They're killing English people.

Winchester (Looking at York): Someone will have to go.

York (Sarcastically): I know just the man—Somerset. He did such a great job in France.

Somerset: Shut up.

Winchester (To York): No, you go. You'll take an army and suppress the rebellion.

York: Ah, but only the King can give me that kind of order.

Suffolk: He'll agree to it. We'll explain it to him.

Queen: Yes. Don't worry about the King.

Suffolk: I'll organize an army right away.

York: Fine. And I trust Gloucester won't be around when I get back.

Winchester: He'll be in *(Smiling)*—a better place, as we say.—It's late. The King's Parliament is adjourned.

(Everyone leaves except York, who lingers.)

York (To the audience): This is the chance I've been waiting for. I'm getting an army, and I can be out of the country for a while. But before I leave, I'm going to arrange something with a friend of mine. His name is Jack Cade. He's a mean son of a bitch. And he loves me. He'd do anything for me. And get this: he's practically a dead ringer for John Mortimer. You remember the Mortimers—my mother's people. My link to the throne. I'll have Cade pass himself off as John Mortimer—even though John Mortimer's dead. Doesn't matter. I'll have him claim the throne and stir up a rebellion—just to see if there's any sympathy for the Yorks. If there is, I'll make my move and topple King Henry, and I'll

have an army to back me up. And if Cade fails, that's okay, too. He'll never rat me out as the instigator, and I can make other plans.

(He leaves.)

Act 3, Scene 2. *The palace at Bury Saint Edmunds. Suffolk comes in furtively and meets the two Murderers coming in from the other side, which is Gloucester's room. They speak softly.*

Suffolk: Is it done?

First Murderer: It's done, sir. He's dead. In his bed.

Suffolk: Good. Did he struggle?

Second Murderer: He did, sir. It took all our strength to smother him. We were careful not to leave any marks on him, like you said.

Suffolk: Good. Both of you go to my house and wait for me. I'll give you your money.

First Murderer: Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

(The Murderers leave. Then the King, Queen, Winchester, Somerset, and Attendants come in.)

King (To Suffolk): Would you see if Gloucester is awake yet? It's time for his trial.

Suffolk: I'll check, my lord.

(Suffolk leaves.)

King: This is going to be a fair trial. I want that understood.

Queen: Of course. We wouldn't have it any other way. And I do hope he can be exonerated.

(Suffolk returns, pretending to be shocked.)

King: Suffolk, what's the matter?

Suffolk: My lord—he's—dead!

Queen (Pretending to be shocked): Oh, no!

Winchester: It must be God's judgment.

(The King faints.)

Queen: Oh!—My lord!

Somerset: Oh, dear!

(Somerset and the Queen try to revive the King.)

Suffolk: I think he's coming to. He'll be all right. *(To the King, revived)* My lord.—It's all right, sir. It's a terrible shock, I know.

King (Angrily): You!—Suffolk!

(The King tries to get up, and Suffolk tries to help him.)

King: Don't touch me!—You murderer! I can see it in your eyes!

Queen: Oh, no, my lord! Don't say that. Suffolk hasn't done anything.

Suffolk: Of course not.

Queen: He's just as grief-stricken as the rest of us.—Aren't you, Suffolk?

Suffolk (Feigning grief): Oh, yes, madam! I'm—I'm so shocked—I can hardly speak.

Queen (To the King): And so am I. Look at me, my lord. Can't you see how terrible I feel?—And what will people think of me? They'll think I had something to do with it. People can be so cruel.

King (Sobbing): My uncle!—My poor uncle!—I never loved anyone more than I loved him!

Queen: Oh? And what about me? Don't you love me? Don't you care about my feelings? Is this what I came to England for? I left my father and my country for you. I thought I would be happy here. But now I know I'm not really very important to you—am I?

(Crowd noise is heard offstage. Then Warwick comes in.)

Warwick (To the King): My lord, there's a rumour going around that the Duke of Gloucester has been murdered, and Lord Suffolk and the Cardinal are involved. The people outside are angry, as you can hear.

King: Warwick, my uncle is dead. Suffolk found him. How he died I don't know. His body is in there *(Indicates Gloucester's room)*.

Warwick: I'm going to have a look.

(Warwick leaves.)

King: I'm afraid to think—it might be murder.

Queen: Don't you want to look?

King: No. I couldn't bear it. I want to remember him as he was alive—the noblest, kindest man I ever knew.

(Warwick returns.)

Warwick: It looks like murder. There are signs of a struggle.

Suffolk: I don't believe it. Who would want to murder Gloucester? And besides, the Cardinal and I had charge of him.—Surely you don't suspect us?

Warwick: It's common knowledge the two of you were his enemies.

Queen: Are you saying they killed him?

Warwick: It seems obvious to me.

(Winchester becomes ill suddenly.)

Somerset: Uncle!—My lords—madam—please excuse us. He's not feeling well.

Queen: Take him home, Somerset. Let him rest.

(Somerset assists Winchester out.)

Suffolk (To Warwick): I don't appreciate your accusation, Warwick.

Queen: Yes, Warwick. You're out of line to accuse Suffolk.

Warwick: Madam, don't defend him. It only makes you look bad.

Suffolk: You low-life! What sort of malformed creature crept into your mother's bed to beget you?

Warwick: If we weren't in the presence of the King, I'd carve my answer on your throat.

Suffolk: Then let's step outside.

Warwick: With pleasure.

(Suffolk and Warwick leave.)

King: If Warwick is right—

(Crowd noise is heard offstage: "Down with Suffolk! Down with Suffolk!")

Queen: Good God! It sounds like a riot!

(Suffolk and Warwick return, their swords out.)

King: What's going on?

Suffolk: Warwick has the crowd stirred up against me! You see what a traitor he is?

(More crowd noise: "Down with Suffolk! Down with Suffolk!") Then Salisbury comes in, calling behind him from the wing.)

Salisbury: Yes, I'll tell the King! Hold on! *(To the King)* My lord, the people are demanding that Suffolk should be put to death, or else banished from England. If you don't, they'll tear him to pieces. They regard him as a threat to you.

Suffolk: And who put that idea in their heads? You did! *(To the King)* You're not going to listen to a mob of hooligans, are you, my lord? They're nothing but a pack of howling dogs.

(More crowd noise: "Down with Suffolk! Down with Suffolk!")

King: Salisbury, tell the people that I am touched by their concern for me. And I will banish Suffolk.—Suffolk, you must be out of the country within three days.

Salisbury: Thank you, my lord! A wise decision.

(Salisbury leaves.)

Queen (Clasping the King's hand): Oh, please, my lord! Don't banish him!

(The King shakes off her hand.)

King: Don't plead for him. He's banished.—Warwick, come with me. I must speak to you.

(The King, Warwick, and Attendants leave. Only the Queen and Suffolk remain. They exchange a heartbroken look.)

Queen: I'm sorry.

Suffolk: Damned Nevilles! They should rot in hell!

(They embrace.)

Queen: I'll try to bring you back. Or maybe I'll be banished, too. I don't care. As long as we can be together.

Suffolk: Any place on earth would be heaven with you. Without you, any place is hell.

(They separate when a Messenger comes in. [Author's note: In the original, this is Sir William Vaux.])

Messenger: Madam, the Cardinal is extremely ill. He could die at any moment. He's out of his mind. He's even talking to Lord Gloucester's ghost.

Queen: Go tell the King.

Messenger: Yes, madam.

(The Messenger leaves.)

Queen: My darling, you must leave. If the King finds you here, he may have you executed.

Suffolk: If I go, I'm dead anyway—dead without you.

(They kiss.)

Queen: Go to France. Try to write to me.

Suffolk: I will. Just don't lose me.

Queen: I won't. I promise.

(Suffolk leaves.)

Act 3, Scene 3. *London. The bedroom of the Cardinal of Winchester. The Cardinal is in bed when the King, Salisbury, and Warwick come in. The Cardinal is delirious. The visitors sit or stand by the bed.*

King: My Lord Cardinal, can you hear me? It's the King.

Winchester: Death?—Have you come for me?—I'll give you everything I have if you let me live.

Warwick: Beaufort, don't you recognize me? *[Author's note: The Cardinal's surname.]*

Winchester: When is my trial?—Is it for murder?—It wasn't my fault.—Gloucester died in bed.—No, don't torture me.—I'll confess.—Oh!—He's alive!—I can see him!—His eyes are plucked out.—All right, give me the poison.—Yes, I'll drink it now.

King: The poor man. He's out of his mind.

Salisbury: He doesn't even recognize us.

King: My Lord Cardinal, listen to me. If you're at peace with God, raise your hand so we'll know.

(Winchester stares at the King for a moment and then dies, without raising his hand.)

Warwick: Tsk.—A bad death. It seems he died with a bad conscience.

King: No, no, Warwick, don't say that. We're all sinners, after all.—Let's go into the other room and say a prayer for him.

(They leave.)

Act 4, Scene 1. *Before the curtain goes up, there are alarms of a fight at sea. This is off the coast of Kent, aboard a pirate ship. The Captain, the Master, the Master's Mate, and Walter Whitmore come in, swords out, behind their prisoners—the Duke of Suffolk, in disguise, and two Gentlemen.*

Captain (To the Prisoners): Thought you could get away from us, did you?—Ha!—We'll collect a fine ransom from you, or else cut your throats! *(To the Master, indicating the First Gentleman)* This one's yours. *(To the Mate, indicating the Second Gentleman)* And this one's yours. *(Finally, he grabs Suffolk. To Whitmore)* And this pile of rags is yours, Walter Whitmore.

First Gentleman: Don't hurt us, Captain! We'll pay the ransom. Whatever you want.

Captain (To his men): What do you think—a thousand crowns each?

Master and Mate: Yes! Yes!

Whitmore: I'd rather cut all their throats. It would serve them right for the men we lost.

Two Gentlemen: No! No! We'll pay the thousand crowns!

Whitmore (To Suffolk): What about you? You don't look like you're worth very much. Maybe I'll just cut your throat.

Suffolk (Aside): It was prophesied that I would die at sea.

Whitmore: Well? What do you have to say for yourself?

Suffolk: Do you know who I am? I am William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk.

Whitmore: Dressed like that?

Suffolk: Never mind how I'm dressed. This is just a disguise. I'm related to the King. Don't you know that? I have Lancaster blood in me. You wouldn't dare kill me. *[Author's note: Suffolk is lying. He is not related to the King.]*

Whitmore: Ha!—What do you think, Captain?

Captain: If he's Suffolk, he deserves to die. *(To Suffolk)* I know all about you. You're the one who sold us out to the French. You gave away our lands. You've been fucking Queen Margaret. And you helped murder the Duke of Gloucester.

Suffolk: Liar!

Captain: You and all your rotten crowd are finished. You think everyone's forgotten about how the Lancasters stole the crown? The Yorks haven't forgotten. The Nevilles haven't forgotten. And a lot of good people in Kent and elsewhere haven't forgotten. Suffolk, you die!

Suffolk: Pirates! Criminals! You're scum compared to me! You're not fit to lick my boots!

First Gentleman (To Suffolk): Don't antagonize them, sir.

Suffolk: I don't care! Fuck these goddamn sons of bitches!—I'm a thousand times better than you! I am a noble, and you are shit! I'm the Duke of Suffolk, and I say fuck you! I'm not going to grovel for my life!

Captain: Good for you, sir! That's the spirit! *(To Whitmore)* Take him away and do whatever you want with him.

Whitmore: Thank you, Captain!

(Whitmore drags Suffolk out.)

Captain: Now, as for these two.—*(Indicates the First Gentleman)* He can go. *(Indicates the Second Gentleman)* And we'll keep this one.

(They leave, except for the First Gentleman, who stands there frightened. Then Whitmore returns with Suffolk's head.)

Whitmore: Here's your friend. Take him back to Queen Margaret.

(Whitmore puts the head down and leaves.)

First Gentleman: Bastards!

(He is picking up the head as the curtain falls.)

Act 4, Scene 2. *Blackheath, Kent. Two rebels, George Bevis and John Holland, come in, carrying long staves.*

Bevis: It's about time we got rid of these damned nobles and gave England back to the people!

Holland (To the audience): Power to the people!—Jack Cade will do it. We're behind him.

Bevis: Bloody, good-for-nothing nobles! *(He spits.)* Always pretending they're better than the rest of us.

Holland: You said it. Living high on the hog while we have to work our fingers to the bone just to scrape by.

Bevis: Here comes Cade now.

(Jack Cade comes in with a group of rebel followers, including Dick the Butcher and Smith the Weaver.)

Cade: Workers of England, unite! We'll have no more aristocracy or any other parasites!

(Cheers from the Rebels.)

Cade: Now, then—everyone quiet. Listen to me. My father was a Mortimer.

Butcher (Aside to the audience): He was a bricklayer.

Cade: My wife was descended from the Lacys. *[Author's note: A noble family.]*

Butcher (Aside to the audience): She sold shoelaces.

Cade: Therefore I come from an honourable house.

Butcher (Aside to the audience): With two rooms and an outhouse.

Cade: I have proven my courage many times.

Butcher (Aside to the audience): He's been whipped in public three times for stealing and never cried once.

Cade: I will reform England. When I become King, bread will be four loaves for a penny.

Rebels: Hurray!

Cade: Beer will be half-price and double-strength.

Rebels: Hurray!

Cade: Everyone will eat and drink at my expense, and everyone will wear an identical suit of clothing to show solidarity.

Rebels: Hurray!

Butcher (Aside to the audience but this time too loud): And we'll kill all the lawyers!

Rebels: Kill the lawyers! Kill the lawyers!

Cade: That's a great idea, Dick. We'll kill the lawyers. They're all bastards. I'm going to start making a list.

(Some Commoners drag in the Clerk of Chatham.)

Weaver: It's the Clerk of Chatham. He can read and write and do numbers.

(The Rebels and Commoners boo angrily.)

Cade: A villain if I ever heard of one.

Clerk: Who—me?

Weaver: He teaches young boys how to write.

(Loud booing from the crowd.)

Weaver: And he carries a book with red letters in it. You know what that means.

Crowd: Witchcraft! Witchcraft!

Weaver: And he writes legal documents in a language only lawyers can understand.

(Loud booing and angry comments.)

Cade: Now, now, quiet down. We mustn't convict anyone without a proper hearing. We have our credibility to think of. *(To the Clerk)* Now.—You.—What's your name?

Clerk: Emmanuel.

Cade: Do you write your name in letters, or do you sign with a mark like an honest man?

Clerk: I'm an educated man. I can write as well as anyone.

Crowd: Guilty! Guilty!

Cade: Good enough. Take him away and hang him.

(The Commoners drag out the Clerk. Then a Messenger rushes in.)

Messenger: General! Run! The King's forces are coming! Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother are leading them!

Cade: I'm not running, and nobody else is running either. Why should we? Sir Humphrey Stafford is just a knight, isn't he?

Messenger: Yes.

Cade: Well, I can be a knight, too.—Here, give me this. *(He borrows somebody's stave and taps himself on the shoulders.)* I am now—Sir John Mortimer.

One Rebel (Aside to another): I didn't know you could do that.

(Sir Humphrey Stafford and his brother William come in with Soldiers.)

Stafford (To the Rebels): All right, let's break this up right now! We're not going to have any of this mischief! I want all you men to lay down your weapons and go home.

William Stafford: Or else you'll die.

Cade (To the Rebels): They're bluffing. You fellows stick with me. I'm the rightful heir to the throne.

Stafford: You? You work in a cloth factory.

Cade: Wait, wait, wait—just a minute now. Just listen to me. Edmund Mortimer, the Earl of March, married Philippa, the daughter of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, didn't he?

Stafford: So what?

Cade: They had twins.

William Stafford: They did not.

Cade: They did. One of them was stolen by a beggar woman and became a bricklayer, and he didn't know his true parentage. That man was my father.

William Stafford: What a load of crap!

Weaver: Oh, it's true, sir! He made the chimney in me father's house, and it's standing still. That proves it.

Stafford (To the Rebels): Do you really believe all this shit?

Rebels: Yes! Yes! He should be King!

William Stafford (To Cade): The Duke of York told you to say all this, didn't he?

Cade: No. *(Aside to the audience)* I made it up myself.—Now you go back to the King and tell him from me that out of respect for his father, Henry the Fifth, I will let him stay on the throne for now—provided that I get appointed Lord Protector.

Butcher: And we'll hang Lord Saye for giving Maine back to the French.

William Stafford: Lord Saye? What's he got to do with it?

Cade: He speaks French, doesn't he? That proves he's a traitor.

Rebels: Yes! Yes! Hang him!

William Stafford (To Humphrey Stafford): These people are idiots.

Stafford: They certainly are. *(To the Rebels)* Now, for the last time, listen to me. This man *(Indicating Cade)* is a traitor and all those who follow him will be put to death. Those who want to remain friends with the King should follow me.

(The Staffords and Soldiers leave.)

Cade: Stick with me, everyone. Think of liberty—and justice—and cheap bread and beer. We'll wipe out all those prissy aristocrats with their patent leather shoes, and their snuff, and their cologne. We'll kill anyone who doesn't have manure on his shoes like an honest man.

(The Rebels cheer.)

Butcher (Looking): Uh, oh.—It looks like they're getting into battle formation.

Cade: Never mind their fucking battle formation. We don't need any of that fancy military stuff. Real fighters just attack—any way they feel like it.—Come on!

(They all leave noisily.)

Act 4, Scene 3. *Blackheath. Sounds of fighting before the curtain goes up. Then Dick the Butcher is standing over the bodies of the two Staffords. Jack Cade and the Rebels come in.*

Cade: Dick the Butcher! Are you all right?

Butcher: Right as rain, sir.—Look. I got 'em both.

Cade: The Staffords! Well done, Dick! You get a reward for this. Lent will be doubled to eighty days, and you'll be allowed to kill ninety-nine animals a week.

Butcher: Oh! Great! I'll have a monopoly. *(Nudges Cade)* Of course, the meat is for those who must have it for medical reasons—heh, heh!

Cade (Nudging back): Of course—heh, heh! And I'll always know where to get lamb chops whenever I feel faint from too much praying—ha, ha!

Butcher: Ha, ha!

Cade (Grabbing the armour from the bodies): I'm going to put on their armour, and we'll drag the bodies all the way to London.

Butcher: Say, what about letting all the prisoners out of jail?

Cade: Later. Right now I'm more interested in killing lawyers.—Come on.

(All leave, dragging the bodies.)

Act 4, Scene 3A. *[Author's note: This scene does not appear in the original play.] The Herald comes in with a paper and speaks to the audience.*

Herald: The following lawyers have been put to death so far: Clive Loyns of Walsall, Sefton Kwasnik of Manchester, Stephen Silverman of London, Michael Nemeth of London, Peter Farrow of Bournemouth, Peter Brindley of Cardiff, Jonathan Finebaum of London, Peter Hay of Richmond, Graham Brierton of London, and Nadeem Rashid of Manchester.—Thank you. That is all.

(He leaves.)

Act 4, Scene 4. *The palace in London. King Henry comes in reading a letter, followed by the Queen, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Saye, and Attendants. [Author's note: In the original, the Queen is carrying Suffolk's head! I don't know what Shakespeare was smoking when he wrote this scene, but I'm doing him a favour by deleting that ludicrous detail.] The Queen looks depressed.*

Buckingham: What are you going to do about the rebels' demands, my lord?

King: If only my uncle were alive. He'd know what to do.—Perhaps we could reason with them. I hate the thought of civil war. Violence makes me sick.

(The Queen reacts as if she were nauseous.)

King (To the Queen): Still upset about your friend Suffolk? I wonder if you'd feel so sick if they'd cut off my head.

Queen: Don't say that.

King: Lord Saye, that lunatic Cade has sworn to have your head.

Saye: I hope you have his first, my lord.

(A Messenger comes in.)

Messenger: Your Majesty!

King: What news?

Messenger: The rebels are in Southwark. Jack Cade is now calling himself Lord Mortimer. He claims that he's the true King and your Majesty is a usurper. He's got a big mob behind him. They killed the Staffords, and they want to kill all the nobles.

King: It's terrible. How can people act like that? If we could only reason with them.

Buckingham: My lord, for your own safety, you should go to Kenilworth until we can put a stop to this rebellion.

King: I suppose.—Lord Saye, you should come with us.

Saye: If I did, I might put your Majesty in greater danger. I'd rather stay in London and try to keep out of sight.

(A Second Messenger comes in.)

Second Messenger (To the King): My lord, Cade and his people are almost at London Bridge. Everyone's either running away or joining up with him. He wants to destroy the palace.

Buckingham (To the King): My lord, it's best you leave right away. Forget about trying to reason with them. It would be like trying to reason with a forest fire.

King: You're probably right, Buckingham.—Come, Margaret. Don't worry. God will protect us.

Queen (Aside): Without Suffolk, there's nothing to live for.

King: Be careful, Saye.

Buckingham (To Saye): Stay out of sight and don't trust anyone.

Saye: I'll be all right. I haven't done anything wrong. My conscience is clear.

Buckingham: A raging fire doesn't discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. You be careful.

(They leave, Saye separately.)

Act 4, Scene 5. *Before the Tower of London. Lord Scales is walking above when several Citizens come in below.*

Scales: What's happening? Is Cade dead or alive?

Citizen: My Lord Scales, Cade and his mob have taken London Bridge. They're killing everyone who tries to stop them. The Mayor begs you for help.

Scales: I'll send what help I can, but I have to protect the Tower. They've already tried to take it once, and they'll probably try again. Go to Smithfield and try to raise some men. I'll send Matthew Gough to you. Don't give up! We're fighting for the King, and we're fighting for our lives!—Go.

Citizen: Yes, my lord.

(They leave, Scales above and the Citizens below.)

Act 4, Scene 6. *This scene is deleted.*

Act 4, Scene 7. *Smithfield. Before the curtain rises, there is a brief interval of sounds of fighting. Then Jack Cade and his followers come in (except Bevis, who will come in shortly).*

Cade: That takes care of Matthew Gough and the forces from the Tower. Next thing we do, we'll burn down the Duke of Lancaster's house and all the courts.

Butcher: Jack—er, I mean Lord Mortimer—I have a suggestion.

Cade: Let's hear it.

Butcher: From now on there should be no laws in writing—only what you say.

Holland (Aside to Smith the Weaver): Oh—brilliant.

Weaver (Aside to Holland): Welcome to the revolution.

Cade: Excellent idea, Dick. We'll burn everything—every scrap of paper in Parliament.

(A Messenger comes in.)

Messenger: My lord, we've captured Lord Saye.

(Bevis comes in, with Saye as a prisoner.)

Cade: Well, well, well—speak of the devil.—Lord Saye.—I think we'll chop his head off, stick it back on, and chop it off again. *(To Saye)* What do you have to say for yourself, you aristocratic cockroach?

Saye: I haven't done anything.

Cade: Oh, you haven't done anything, have you? You imposed property taxes to build—a grammar school!

(Angry murmurs from the Rebels.)

Saye: Yes. To teach boys to read.

Cade: You mean, to corrupt them! And you built a paper mill to make paper for books! And you appointed justices of the peace to try poor illiterates! And worst of all—your horse wears a pretty blanket so you can ride on him like a gentleman!

Saye: So what?

Cade: Why should your horse wear a blanket when plenty of poor people have no blanket at all?

Butcher: Is your horse better than me?

Others: Kill him! Kill him!

Saye: What wicked men you are! I've never done anything bad to anyone. If I am learned and try to make others learned as well, it's because ignorance is the worst disease of all—worse than the plague.

Butcher: He doesn't care about people who die of the plague!

Others: Oh! Oh!

Saye: I mean that the ignorant don't realize how sick they are.

Cade: Is that so? We're ignorant and we don't know it, eh? What an insult!—Hit him!

(Several of the Rebels strike Saye.)

Cade: Take him away and kill him.

Saye: Why? What have I done to any of you that you would kill me? Tell me! Tell me!

Cade (After a brief pause): It's just that I can't stand educated people.—Take him away!

(Several Rebels drag Saye out.)

Rebel: My lord, when do we rape and pillage? You promised us rape and pillage.

Others: Yes! Yes! Rape and pillage!

Cade: Yes, yes. Soon enough. Cheapside is open all night.

[Author's note: Some texts have a scene break here, but I'm skipping it.]

(A trumpet parley is heard.)

Cade: That's a parley. Somebody wants to talk to us.

(The Duke of Buckingham and Lord Clifford come in, with Soldiers. [Author's note: This is Thomas Clifford, the 8th Baron de Clifford. He is referred to in some texts as "Old Clifford", although historically he was only 36 at this time. "Young Clifford" was his son, John, who was 15.]

Cade: The Duke of Buckingham—and Lord Clifford.—What do you want?

Buckingham: We've been sent by the King. *(To the Rebels)* Now listen, you men. You've been misled by this man. He's not a Mortimer, he's not even remotely related to the Mortimers, and he has no claim

whatever to the throne. Now, the King will pardon all of you if you leave this man and go home in peace.

Clifford: The King is offering you mercy out of the goodness of his heart. If you have any sense, you'll take it. Otherwise, you'll all end up dead. If you hate the King, then you must hate his father, too—Henry the Fifth—who brought great glory to England. Now, then—what's it to be?

(The Rebels murmur aside to each other.)

Rebel: God save the King!

All the Rebels: God save the King! Henry the Sixth!

Cade: What! Are you leaving me just like that? Do you want to be slaves to the nobles? Do you want them to rape your wives and daughters? Do you want to live in poverty and starve and go naked?—Well! If that's how you feel, I'll fight them myself, and shame on you!

(The Rebels murmur aside to each other.)

Rebel: We're with Cade!

All the Rebels: Cade! Cade! Lord Mortimer! King Jack!

Clifford: Be quiet and listen! Cade is a nobody. He's a thief. He's an opportunist. Is he going to invade France and recapture our lost territories and reward you with titles? No! This rebellion only plays into the hands of the French. Why, you're handing them England on a silver platter. Then they'll be your masters. Is that what you want? You are English, so act English! Henry is your King. He'll stand up for England—but you must stand by him! And God is on our side because King Henry is a pious Christian! Remember that!—Now, then, what do you say?

(The Rebels murmur aside to each other.)

Rebel: Hurray for Clifford!

All the Rebels: Clifford and Buckingham! King Henry! God save King Henry!

Cade: What the hell? *(He looks all around but sees that everyone's against him. He tries not to show his fear.)* All I can say is—I am very, very, very, very disappointed in you.

(He walks away quickly.)

Buckingham: Whoever brings back Cade's head will get a reward of one thousand crowns in gold!

(All the Rebels chase after Cade.)

Clifford: Well done.

Buckingham: You, too.

(They exchange a high-five or bump fists and leave with the Soldiers.)

Act 4, Scene 8. *Kenilworth Castle. The King, Queen, and Duke of Somerset are present when Buckingham and Clifford come in.*

Buckingham: Good health to your Majesty!

King: What's happened with Cade and his rebels?

Clifford: Cade's escaped, my lord. But the good news is that all his followers have abandoned him. The rebellion's over.

King: Thank God for that!

Buckingham: I've offered a reward of a thousand crowns to whoever brings us his head. I hope that's all right with you.

King: Of course. I'll be glad to pay it.

(A Messenger comes in.)

Messenger: My lord, the Duke of York has returned from Ireland with a big army—including the Irish. He wants to arrest the Duke of Somerset. He calls him a traitor.

King: My God, it's one thing after another. Why can't we have peace in this kingdom? Sometimes I wish I'd been born a commoner. Why must I have to deal with so many problems?

Queen: That's what a king is supposed to do, my lord.

Somerset: All kings have problems, my lord. Your father would want you to do the best you can and have faith in God.

King: Yes—yes—you're right, Somerset.—Buckingham, can you go and talk to York?

Buckingham: Of course, my lord.

King: Find out exactly what he wants and what his intentions are. Tell him—tell him I've sent Somerset to the Tower as a prisoner. *(To Somerset)* Just temporarily, you understand—until this matter can be straightened out.

Somerset: Of course, my lord. Whatever is in the best interest of the country.

King: Thank you, Somerset.—Now, Buckingham, try to be conciliatory with York. He has a bad temper. Don't set him off.

Buckingham: I'll be the soul of diplomacy, my lord.

King (Sighing): Ach!—Margaret, I must learn to govern better. I don't want to be remembered as the last King of the House of Lancaster.—Come.

(He and Margaret leave, followed by the others, except Buckingham, who leaves separately.)

Act 4, Scene 9. *The garden of Alexander Iden in Kent. The sound of someone jumping over or down from a wall. Then Jack Cade comes. He kneels down and starts pulling out greens and eating them.*

Cade: Five days with nothing to eat.—I've got to eat something.

(Alexander Iden comes in with a couple of Servants. All are armed.)

Iden: What's the meaning of this? What are you doing in my garden?

Cade: I'm hungry! And don't even think of betraying me or I'll cut your head off!

Iden: What!—Of all the nerve! You're trespassing on my property and eating from my garden, and now you threaten me?

Cade: I'll kill you if I have to! *(He draws his sword and the Servants draw theirs in response.)* You gentlemen! You scum! When I take over the country, you'll all be wiped out!

Servant (To Iden): He's a madman, sir.

Iden: Stay back. I'll deal with him.

(Iden draws his sword.)

Cade: I hate your kind! I hate all of you! You think you're so superior!

(Cade attacks, and Iden fights back. Cade is too weak to fight well. Iden strikes him. Cade collapses.)

Cade: I could have beaten you—Now you can brag—you killed Jack Cade.

(He dies.)

Servants: Cade!

Iden: That bloody traitor!—Lads, I'll never clean this sword. I'm going to mount it on the wall just like it is, with his blood on it.—Let's find a ditch and dump him in it. I'm going to cut off his head and take it to the King.—Come on.

(They leave, dragging Cade's body.)

Act 5, Scene 1. *A field in Kent, in the vicinity of Saint Albans. York comes in with his army and Attendants.*

York: Now we'll settle things once and for all. I'm the lawful King of England. Henry's weak. He's got to go. England needs somebody tough like me.

Soldiers: Aye, my lord!

(Buckingham comes in.)

Buckingham: My lord of York.

York: Lord Buckingham.

Buckingham: If you come as a friend, then I greet you as a friend.

York: And so do I, sir. Did the King send you?

Buckingham: Yes. He wants to know what your intentions are. He's concerned about this army of yours. It does give a certain—ominous—impression, you realize.

York: No, no, no. That's not it at all. My sole intention is to remove Somerset. After what happened in France, he's a traitor. He's got to go. And I had also heard about Cade, and I was concerned about the, uh—the King's safety, of course.

Buckingham: Well, I do think it's rather presumptuous of you to come back with such an intimidating force and demand Somerset's removal. But if it makes you feel any better, I can tell you that Somerset's been sent to the Tower of London as a prisoner.

York: Seriously? Is that true?

Buckingham: Word of honour.

York: Well!—That's a load off my mind. Then I guess I can dismiss my army.

Buckingham: I think that would be a very good idea.

York (To the Soldiers): Okay, you men are dismissed. Meet me tomorrow at Saint Goerge's field, and I'll pay you your wages.

Soldiers: Thank you, my lord.

(The Soldiers leave.)

Buckingham: The King will be very happy to know that you're still loyal.

York: As long as Somerset is a prisoner, I'm satisfied.

(King Henry comes in with his Attendants.)

King: There you are—York—Buckingham.—So what's the story here?

Buckingham: Everything's okay, my lord. York came back with a big army because he wanted to get rid of Somerset, and he was concerned about the rebellion. But I told him Somerset's in prison.

King: All right, then. Now I feel better.

(Iden comes in with Cade's head.)

Iden: Your Majesty—my lords. Your troubles are over. Here's what's left of Jack Cade. I caught him in my garden and killed him.

King: Oh! Brilliant! *(Looks toward heaven)* Thank you, God!—Sir, I can't tell you what a relief this is to me.

Iden: I knew it would be, my lord.

King: What is your name, sir?

Iden: My name is Alexander Iden. I'm just a humble esquire of Kent and your Majesty's loyal subject.

Buckingham (To the King): This man deserves to be knighted, I'd say.

King: He certainly does. *(To Iden)* Kneel before me, sir. *(Iden kneels, and the King taps him on the shoulder with his sword.)* You are now Sir Alexander Iden, a knight of England. You may rise.

(Iden rises.)

Iden: Thank you, my lord. You are most gracious.

King: And generous. There's a reward of a thousand crowns coming to you for this.

Iden: Thank you, my lord.

King: Just take that head to the palace, and, um—give it to someone—and they'll pay you.

Iden: Yes, your Majesty. Thank you.

(Iden leaves. Then Queen Margaret comes in with Somerset, and York reacts with a look of anger.)

King (To the Queen, in a hushed voice): What are you doing here? What's he doing here?

Queen: Somerset is not going to hide from York.

York (To Buckingham): You lied to me. The King sent you, so he obviously told you to lie.

King: Now, now—please, my lord of York. You should remember your place.

York: My place, sir? My place is on the throne. You don't deserve to be King. You're weak. And now you're through—my lord of Lancaster.

Somerset: You traitor! You're under arrest!

York: Don't make me laugh. *(To an Attendant)* Go get my sons, Edward and Richard.

(The Attendant leaves.)

York (To Somerset): Hey, if you arrest me, my sons will pay my bail.

Queen: We'll see about that. *(To Buckingham)* Go get Clifford.

(Buckingham leaves.)

York: The only thing worse than having you for a Queen is having the bubonic plague.

Queen: You'll pay for that insult someday.

(Edward and Richard Plantagenet come in with Soldiers from one side; Clifford, his son, and Soldiers come in from the other side. Clifford kneels to the King.)

Clifford: Good health to my gracious King.

York: Hey—over here, Clifford. You can kneel before me. I'm the King now.

Clifford (To the King): Is he crazy?

King: No, just ambitious.

Clifford: He's a traitor. We'll arrest him and lock him up.

Queen: He's already under arrest, but he won't go. His—boys—are here to speak for him.

Edward: And we will, madam.

Richard (Hand on his sword): With our swords, if necessary.

Clifford: This is an outrage! You're all traitors!

York: No, you're the traitors. As of now, I'm the King. *(To an Attendant)* Get Salisbury and Warwick.

(The Attendant leaves.)

King (Softly): This would never have happened if Gloucester were here to protect me.

Queen: He's not your protector any more. He's dead.

King: Margaret, I'm the King. What should I do?

Queen (With a slight look of contempt): Be the King—what else?

(The Attendant returns with Salisbury, Warwick, and Soldiers.)

Clifford: Warwick—Salisbury—Are you on York's side?

King: How could you do this to me? Where's your loyalty?

Salisbury: I'm sorry, my lord, but I've thought it over very carefully, and I've decided that the Duke of York is the rightful heir to the throne.

King: But you've sworn your loyalty to me.

Salisbury: That was a mistake, and I no longer consider myself bound to you. If an oath is wrong to begin with, then it's wrong to bind oneself to it.

Queen: The traitor pretends to be a philosopher.

King (To an Attendant): Get Lord Buckingham. Tell him to bring soldiers.

(The Attendant leaves.)

York: You can call Buckingham and all the soldiers you can find, but it won't make any difference. I can take the throne by force if I have to.

Clifford: You'll die for this.

Warwick: Clifford, you should go home and take a nap.

Clifford: I'll take a nap when you're all in your graves.

Warwick: I'll be attending your funeral—provided that a luncheon is served.

Young Clifford (To his father): I'm ready to fight these bastards.

Richard: You can fight me first. I'm ready for you.

Young Clifford: You crawling snake. I'll cut your head off.

Richard: Shouldn't you be in school or something?—Come on, father. Let's go eat something bloody. I'm in the mood.

(The two parties leave separately.)

[Author's note: From this point on, the scene breaks are not the same in all texts. I'm following the model of the Pelican Shakespeare edition.]

Act 5, Scene 2. *A road outside an alehouse called The Castle. Somerset walks by and stops and notices the sign.*

Somerset: The Castle—What was it that witch said?—I should stay away from castles?

(His back is turned to the wing from where Richard Plantagenet rushes in, sword out. Somerset turns and gets stabbed in the heart and dies.)

Richard: Score one for the Yorks.

(He drags the body out.)

Act 5, Scene 3. *On the field. Warwick comes in.*

Warwick (Calling): Clifford of Cumberland! Don't hide from me! Come out and fight!

Clifford (Within): Stay where you are! I'm coming for you!

(York comes in behind Warwick.)

Warwick: My lord, you're on foot.

York: Clifford killed my horse. But I got even. I killed his.

(Clifford comes in.)

Warwick: There you are. Now it's you or me, Clifford.

York: No. He's mine. Go look for somebody else.

Warwick: All right. I yield to my future King.

(Warwick leaves.)

York: Clifford, only one of us walks away from this alive. And I hate you and all the Lancasters.

Clifford: As long as I'm alive, England will never be ruled by the Yorks.

(They duel. York kills Clifford.)

York: And so—death to the Lancasters.

(He leaves. Then Young Clifford comes in and finds his father's body.)

Young Clifford: Father! *(He kneels beside the body.)* The Yorks will pay for this. I will have no pity. My heart will be a stone.—Death to all Yorks!

(He carries out his father's body.)

Act 5, Scene 4. *On the field. Sounds of battle. Several Soldiers assist the wounded Duke of Buckingham into his tent. The King, Queen, and Attendants come in.*

King: Buckingham! Are you hurt badly?

Buckingham: Don't worry about me, my lord. You must get away for your own safety.

Queen: Yes! We have to run, my lord!

King: Can any man outrun fate? If it is God's will—

Queen: Never mind God's will! What's the point of staying? You can't fight. If we stay, we'll be captured. If we can get to London, we'll be all right.

(Young Clifford comes in.)

Queen: John Clifford, talk some sense into the King. He won't leave.

Young Clifford: My lord, for my part I would gladly stay and fight. But the Queen is right. You must leave for your own sake. We may have lost this battle, but the war isn't over. We'll get back at them.

King: I suppose you're right.

(They all leave, except Buckingham and the Soldiers who assisted him.)

Act 5, Scene 5. *The field. Trumpets in the background. York comes in with his sons, Edward and Richard, plus Soldiers.*

York (To his Sons): Good work, boys. I'm proud of you. We're much closer to the throne now.—Where's Salisbury? Has anyone seen him?

Richard: I was with him on the field. He got knocked off his horse, but I protected him. You know, for an old guy he's still tough.

York: He's tough, all right. That's why I can't afford to lose him.

(Salisbury and Warwick come in.)

York: Thank God you're safe!

Salisbury: Thanks to young Richard. What a brave guy!

Warwick: He'll be King someday!

(Happy laughter.)

Salisbury: We haven't won the war yet. This was just the opening round. The Lancasters are still formidable enemies.

York: The word is that they've fled to London.

Warwick: We should try to get there first.

York: We'll try.—You've all been brilliant. Let me shake all your hands.

(He shakes hands with everyone.)

York: This has been a glorious day—a day to remember.

Warwick: History will remember this as the Battle of Saint Albans—won by the Yorks. God save the next King!

Others: God save the King!

(A trumpet flourish, then they all leave. No curtain down yet. The Epilogue follows. [Author's note: This does not appear in the original.] The Herald comes in and speaks to the audience.)

Herald: So ends the Battle of Saint Albans—the first Battle of Saint Albans. For the Wars of the Roses have only just begun. And just as the tides ebb and flow, so will the fortunes of the Yorks and Lancasters for the next thirty years. Many graves are yet to be dug—graves strewn with red roses or white roses. For now, we give you pause to ponder on what you have seen—the struggles for power, the rivalries and hatreds, pride, honour, and revenge—strength against strength, steel against steel, will against will—and reason and morality crushed underfoot. But we will meet again on the fields of war, where swords clash, blood flows, and God looks down upon his children, all bent on slaughtering each other. We know you'll be back, for this, my friends, is your history.

(He leaves. Curtain.)

END

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by Crad Kilodney, Toronto, Canada.

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